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July 17, 1986

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MEMORANDUM TO: D. W. Corder
Acting Assistant Deputy Minister
Community and Public Health
Room 980 Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street

SUBJECT: Environmental Hypersensitivity

Thank you for an opportunity to review the Draft Report of the Advisory Panel on Environmental Hypersensitivity. The report is well prepared and contains comments on the Ad Hoc Committee's (Thomson) recommendations regarding research into the nature and causes of this illness, sources of funding support, as well as policy directions for selected social and health care programs. The Appendix I research report on the cost of environmental hypersensitivity is again well presented and gives statistical dimensions on the related cost and age/sex distribution of this illness.

The Information and Systems Division's data resources are not able, however, to confirm the statistical findings, nor to estimate the extent of disorders for which the causes are alleged to be environmental in nature. This is due to the following reasons:

1. Diagnostic information is not well reported on the OHIP claims, as it is not a condition of payment.
2. There is no ICD-9 (the International Classification of Diseases - 9th Revision) diagnostic category specifically designated for the illness. "Environmental hypersensitivity" is a colloquial term used to describe a compendium of disorders which remain poorly defined at present.
3. Due to its nature, the illness is likely to be diagnosed only after repeated contacts with the health care providers.

The above noted limitations compound on each other, and for that reason, the statistical information on environmental hypersensitivity will have to be obtained from the special studies rather than from the centrally collected data systems.

D. E. Harry
Executive Director
Information & Systems Division

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